As the Ancients Saw the Old World

TERRESTRIAL AND CELESTIAL GLOBES, THEIR HISTORY AND CONSTRUCTION, INCLUDING A CONSIDERATION OF THEIR VALUE AS AIDS IN THE STUDY OF GEOGRAPHY AND ASTRONOMY. By Edward Luther Stevenson. Published for the Hispanic Society by the Yale University Press.

IN the name of true scholarship and high literary achievement hearty congratulations should be tendered Dr. Stevenson as author of this work and to the Hispanic Society for sponsoring it through long years of arduous research, endless correspondence and costly preparation. It is not indulging in exaggeration of its innate worth to say that no public library, no college or university library, or other like collection which includes books of reference can afford to be without it. And it is by no means improbable that the volumes will be cherished in the homes of a great many thoughtful men and women who appreciate the value and interest of so rare a disclosure of historical knowledge.

Hundreds of books have been written about what our ancestors did in the world they lived in. Expeditions have been financed at heavy expense to make archæological and other discoveries—adding to our fund of information concerning the politics, home life, agriculture and other activities of human beings once residing in widely separated areas of the earth and now passed away. Such books, in many instances, have been and are of profound interest and importance. But in his new work on terrestial and celestial globes Dr. Stevenson tells us not so much what our ancestors did as what they thought of the world they lived in—their conceptions of the earth and its surroundings. Directly, as well as indirectly, he gets at the inner mental machinery of those men of past centuries and reveals it to his reader. This was a task for a man of intellectual caliber.

As the author remarks in his foreword, hitherto there has not appeared in English a detailed treatise on globes terrestial and celestial. He might have gone further and said that hitherto in no language has there appeared such an exhaustive treatise as this, or one written with such regard for the niceties of clear, flowing and adequate literary style. Furthermore, the treatise is beautiful as a specimen of typography, and the many illustrations on fine paper lend richness. In addition to a general index there is appended in Vol. II. a special index of globes and globe makers, beginning with the earliest discoverable names of the makers, their places of residence, the kind of globe or globes each made, dates when made and the diameter of each. A lengthy and comprehensive bibliographical list has its proper place. At the end of each chapter are notes of explanation or comment which in themselves well might rank as accomplishment worthy a man of true scholarship in this special field. Thus, briefly, may be given a somewhat general, though very slight, idea of that which the reader may expect to find. And knowing even so little of the work there will be no surprise in the statement that for upward of ten years Dr. Stevenson has been constantly engaged with it, except for the period of war. He has gathered material and illustrations from public museums and private collections, from archives open to all, from others carefully guarded, from historical societies and palaces, from hundreds of sources in various parts of the earth. And here, at last, we have the result.

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The book concerns itself with globes from the earliest times to the close of the eighteenth century. When the study first was undertaken it was thought that perhaps as many as one hundred examples might be located. Instead more than eight hundred were found, and it is not unreasonable to assume the publication of Dr. Stevenson's book may be the means of bringing to light many more in out of the way places. Ancient writers, in the time of Aristotle, and even further back to the Pythagoreans—and possibly still earlier—prove that not a few of our somewhat remote ancestors accepted a spherical theory as to the heavens and the earth. Ptolemy, who died more than seventeen hundred years before Christopher Columbus was born, refers so definitely to globes "as to lead to a belief that globes were by no means uncommon instruments in his day, and that they were regarded as of much value in the study of geography and astronomy, particularly of the latter science." The Farnese globe, however, is the only one which has come down to modern man from that far off time. It is of marble, and is believed to date from about 300 B. C. The Mohammedans were keenly interested in astronomy, and perhaps for that reason constructed many celestial globes during the so-called Christian Middle Ages, though it is doubtful whether they made terrestrial globes.

The expansion of European activities toward the East and the westward voyages of Columbus caused the sixteenth century to open with greatly accelerated interest in geography. Makers of plane maps became more and more active, as did makers of globes. Copper spheres, globes of metal covered with engraved maps, globes to which were affixed manuscript maps and others appeared in increasing numbers. And from that period down to recent times the globe was recognized as an important adjunct to education—to general enlightenment. Of course, the geographers of antiquity hesitated to accept as true the idea of a globular earth, and the Pythagorean philosophers appears as the first learned men to suggest that a theory already accepted as to spherical form of the heavens also might apply to the earth. Their idea of a globular earth was the one which Aristotle defended from a philosopher's standpoint. Generation after generation, century after century, men studied and reflected about the strange world they lived in; some of the globes reproduced in illustration showing how limited was their real knowledge. In Europe, in the Orient and elsewhere were thoughtful minds, in every age, trying to solve the problem of the extent and shape and purpose of this planet. And their progress, often imperfect, now and then interrupted, forms the story of human effort and final attainment which Dr. Stevenson relates so carefully and with such painstaking interest.

Some of the earlier globes were works of high artistic excellence. In 1600, for example, the Zurich goldsmith, Abraham Gessner, manufactured globe goblets, not in response to orders therefor but as a regular part of his trade. Because rich merchants and scholars of wealth took such lively interest in geography he was able to sell all he produced, particularly because they were such finished examples of the goldsmith's art—in design, modeling, casting, embossing, chasing, engraving and solid gilding. One of these, illustrated in Dr. Stevenson's book, is described as follows:

"The goblet is 58 cm. in height. Its larger globe, a terrestrial, is composed of two hemispheres joined on the equator, and has a diameter of 17 cm. The support is a standing figure of Atlas, which also serves as a stem of the lower half of the goblet, just as the celestial sphere with its support, which tops the piece, serves as the stem of the upper half or upper goblet. The oceans, lakes and rivers have a silver surface, while the continents, islands, sea monsters, sailing vessels, principal parallels and meridians are gilded. The continents of Europe, Asia and Africa and the 'terra australis sive Magallanica' have their outlines drawn in the main as they appear on Mercator's map of 1569. . . .

"The celestial globe topping the goblet is given an artistic setting. It is furnished with horizon, meridian and hour circles. The several constellations represented on the surface of the sphere are, through gilding, given special prominence, their execution, like other parts of the piece, being of the finest workmanship.

"The figure of Atlas supporting the globes exhibits skill in its construction. It stands with one foot slightly advanced, with the right hand extended upward as if to catch the ball should it fall from the head of the figure. The hair and beard are gilded, as is also the drapery, one end of which hangs loosely over the right shoulder, while the other covers the front of the body and is held in the left hand at the back, being made to serve in part as a support."

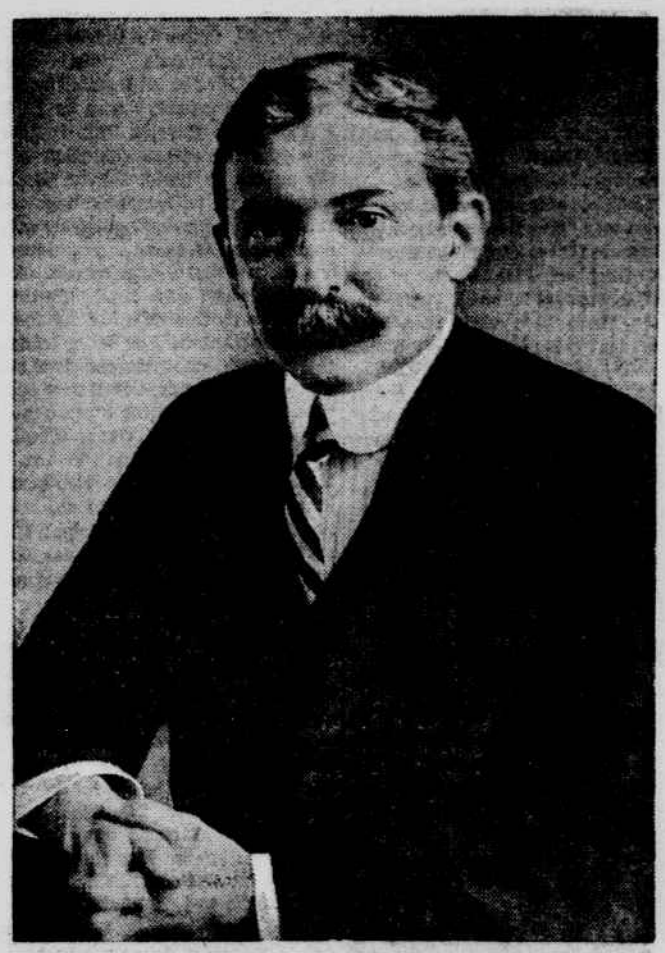
In these words Dr. Stevenson attempts to describe one noted example of the Zurich goldsmith's art as a globe maker. Yet the words, however clear, do not begin to give the reader an idea of the beauty of this piece, which can be perceived by a single glance at its full page illustration. The same thing may be said of the artistic gold beaker globe, dating from 1575, which the late Mr. J. P. Morgan presented to the Metropolitan Museum, as it may also be said of a very fine example of an ivory terrestrial globe in the private library of Mr. Morgan. This specimen has no such feature as that of a supporting Atlas and is composed of two hemispheres joined on the line of the equator. It has, however, several curious features such as legends, inscriptions, &c. For example, in the region devoted to Chinese Asia appears a sentence which, rendered in English, reads thus: "Here they had the art of printing a thousand years ago." The man who made this map and presumably inscribed the words just quoted was Antonio Spano of Tropea, who finished the work in 1593.

In concluding his modest foreword to a very remarkable historical work Dr. tevenson refers briefly to his own boyhood, when, in a country school of Western Illinois, he studied his geography and astronomy lessons with the aid of a terrestrial globe and an orrery. "Can it be," he asks, "that we have revised our educational methods so far in this country as practically to have eliminated the intelligent use of aids so valuable in the study of the branches which globes concern? They enter in fact, but little into modern methods of instruction. If this work could be made to encourage their extensive use and serve in their rehabilitation as aids of inestimable interest and value in geographical and astronomical studies, it will have served the purpose which is most pleasing to the author." To the feeling thus expressed by Dr. Stevenson the present reviewer says "Amen!"

A New World Much Involved

PRIME MINISTERS AND PRESIDENTS. By Charles Hitchcock Sherrill, sometime Minister to the Argentine. George H. Doran Company.

STRANGE creatures indeed are the people living in Germany to-day! Before the war, Gen. Sherrill tells us in his entertaining book, the German workman toiled and seemed contented, although he seldom had more than one meat ration per week. Now he has three or four, and in spite of politics, in spite of the fall of the mark, in spite of everything, he is the happiest workman in the world to-day. Labor in Germany, it appears, is restricted by law to eight hours a day, unless—and note this well—unless the workers unite in petitioning for longer hours.



Charles Hitchcock Sherrill.

"When in Germany," Gen. Sherrill continues, "I kept count of the factories in which the workmen so petitioned, but gave it up when the thirtieth was reached, because the movement seemed so general. This significant phenomenon is found nowhere else in the world. It spells increased production at a time when everywhere else production tends to diminish. Where else in the world are to be found workmen who ask for added hours of work? This rare bird sings, it would appear, only in Germany."

As may be surmised from the quotation above, Gen. Sherrill's new volume is far more than "a series of interviews with the men who are making history"—to use an announcement by the publishers. To be sure, the reader is introduced to fifteen Prime Ministers and four Presidents of European countries, to four Premiers of British dominions and to almost a round dozen of Japanese statesmen and diplomats. In a few instances the introduction is accomplished briefly, with a few deft gestures, the author bringing before us a picture of this or that personage and with apt anecdote framing it securely in memory. In a larger number of instances, however, he minutely describes the appearance and characteristics of great world figures, such as Lloyd George, Briand, Wirth, Admiral Horthy of Hungary, Benes, the Czecho-Slovakian Prime Minister; Jonescu of Rumania and Count Chinda, adviser to the Prince Regent of Japan. And he goes much further than mere description, repeating with care their opinions regarding developments in a world still far from settled, and in this way presenting sidelights which should aid thoughtful Americans to a better understanding of complicated and perplexing international problems as yet unsolved.

The book as a whole is written by one who, for the time being, takes the journalist's point of view. There is little attempt at criticism or philosophical reflection in it. Evidently the author believes that his fellow countrymen ought to know how leading statesmen of other lands really feel regarding the present and the future, and what is being done by the various peoples whom they represent in so many and such varied governments. As a rule, however, the author refrains from unnecessarily expressing personal opinion, and sticks closely to the task he picked out for himself—that of helping other Americans to understand the methods and operation of a number of Governments with which the United States hereafter is to have more and more intimate relations to grasp the point of view of statesmen guiding the destinies of those foreign Governments; and, most important of all, to drive home into the American mind the fact that scattered here and there on earth are not a few backward peoples, possessing comparatively little self-control, always on edge for bickering among themselves and ready at any moment to start a small war—in part from the love of fighting, in other part from sheer ignorance of possible consequences to themselves and reckless disregard of others who might be drawn into conflict.

Through action by the Washington Conference was allayed whatever danger existed of war between Japan and the United States, but when Gen. Sherrill was in Europe gathering material for his book he found the belief prevailing that such a conflict was unavoidable. And of its momentous possibilities he gives more than a hint when he remarks, "It is not out of place here parenthetically to remark that it will be a great disappointment to many of our European friends if this war does not take place." Having said this much to put his fellow Americans on their guard against taking too much for granted, it is to be regretted that Gen. Sherrill did not deem it advisable to state plainly and without equivocation the identity of those "European friends." Such a revelation, made frankly and fearlessly, might have resulted in an international thunderclap, but it would have cleared the air. If the American people are being deceived in the matter of real friendship by some of those whom we trust, we ought to know the truth.

Since this book was written international affairs have undergone surprising changes in more than one direction, through action by the Washington Conference. Yet achievements at Washington do not nullify, by any means, all the elements of a disturbed world situation which the author thought it his patriotic duty to lay before his fellow citizens, comparatively few of whom were in position to measure them as he did—by contact at first hand. This introduction, of some fourteen pages, provides a bird's-eye view of the general situation; and thenceforth the reader, in less than a dozen entertaining chapters, sees the post war British Empire and present day France; chats with makers of the German Republic; visits the Low Countries; gasps with surprise at the new development of profitable farming in Denmark; surveys the problems of Scandinavia, and is given a striking and unusual view of the Petite Entente which holds such grave possibilities for the world. Conditions in Austria and Hungary are noted with appreciation of their importance and changed conditions of the Mediterranean are intelligently portrayed. The volume closes with an interpretation of underlying forces, commercial, political and other, in the Orient, with particular reference to Japan.

In this final chapter Gen. Sherrill relates that one day at Oyster Bay, years after the Russo-Japanese war had passed into history, Col. Roosevelt told me the whole story of his intervention in that conflict, and especially of an episode when an *impasse* had been reached because Japan insisted on a cash indemnity, which Russia refused to pay. He had abridged the abyss between them by suggesting that if Japan would cancel her indemnity demand he would recognize her suzerainty over Corea and withdraw the American Minister from Seoul, the Corean capital. He trusted Kaneko, and it was through him that these negotiations were successfully conducted. (Kaneko was a Harvard graduate and long a member of the Japanese Imperial Privy Council.)

This incident may be fully understood by a comparatively few others than the statesmen directly concerned therein. But it is safe to assume that a great majority of Americans will read it and ponder it with increasing surprise, for it is probable that a large majority believe Japan obtained suzerainty over Corea simply by swooping down upon it with an army and taking permanent possession—not considering acquiescence by the United States or other Powers. In any event, the whole transaction may be deemed a matter of high importance, especially at the present time. Without casting the slightest doubt on the authenticity of Gen. Sherrill's account of this disclosure personally made to him by Col. Roosevelt, it would seem that Japanese-American relations, now so happily improving, might be distinctly furthered should the State Department think it advisable to make public additional details, especially the surrounding circumstances which impelled President Roosevelt's action.

HENRY ROOD.